

Message Text

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45

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15 EB-11

OMB-01 TRSE-00 RSR-01 /107 W
----- 062534

R 291239Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7019

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 3143

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, NO

SUBJ: FAREWELL CALL ON FORMER LABOR PRIME MINISTER BRATTELI

1. FORMER PRIME MINISTER BRATTELI, WHO IS LIKELY TO HEAD NORWAY'S NEXT GOVERNMENT FOLLOWING THE SEPTEMBER ELECTIONS, TOOK TIME OUT FROM THE CAMPAIGN TO RECEIVE ME ON AUGUST 24. OUR PERSONAL RELATIONS HAVE BEEN EXCELLENT OVER THE YEARS EVEN DURING PERIODS OF POLITICAL STRESS, AND HE RECEIVED ME WITH HIS TYPICAL CORDIALITY. WE DISCUSSED FUTURE TRENDS IN NORWEGIAN FOREIGN POLICY, BUT PRIMARILY THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN, ABOUT WHICH HE EXUDED A CERTAIN QUIET CONFIDENCE.

2. BRATTELLI DECLINED TO MAKE ANY PREDICTIONS BUT HE ACKNOWLEDGED BEING ENCOURAGED BY THE INCREASE IN LABOR SUPPORT REVEALED IN THE JULY GALLUP POLL. THE DANGER HE FORSAW WAS THAT THE UNPRECEDENTED NUMBER OF PARTIES WOULD SO SPLIT THE VOTE THAT THERE WOULD BE NO MAJORITY IN THE PARLIAMENT (STORTING). HE HOPED THAT THE NUMBER OF PARTIES WOULD BE PARED BACK TO EIGHT FROM ITS PRESENT LEVEL OF FOURTEEN AFTER THE ELECTION, BUT THOUGHT IT ALSO QUITE POSSIBLE THAT THE PRESENT LEFT SOCIALIST ALLIANCE WOULD

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EVENTUALLY BREAK UP, THUS LEAVING TEN PARTIES IN THE STORTING.

WHILE HE SEEMED TO BELIEVE THAT THE BREAKAWAY LIBERAL NEW PEOPLE'S PARTY WOULD SURVIVE, HE SAID HE WOULD NOT BET ON CHAIRMAN SEIP RECEIVING A SEAT.

3. I ASKED BRATTELI WHETHER HE HAD DECIDED WHO WOULD BE HIS FOREIGN MINISTER, AND REFERRED TO TWO OF THE LEADING CANDIDATES, CAPPELEN, THE LAST LABOR FOREIGN MINISTER, AND STOLTENBERG, FORMER UNDER SECRETARY IN THE FORMIN AND PRESENTLY INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY OF THE NATIONAL TRADE UNION FEDERATION. BRATTELI SAID THAT HE HAD NOT CROSSED THAT BRIDGE YET BUT THE PERSONS I HAD NAMED WERE BOTH LOGICAL CANDIDATES. THE FACT THAT BRATTELI DID NOT DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN CAPPELEN AND STOLTENBERG AND WENT ON TO ASSURE ME THAT WHOEVER BECOMES FOREIGN MINISTER, NORWAY'S POLICY WILL NOT CHANGE, SUGGESTS THAT STOLTENBERG IS INDEED A CANDIDATE. WHILE BRATTELI IS CERTAINLY AWARE THAT STOLTENBERG IS DISTRUSTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE LABOR PARTY MAINSTREAM, HE MAY WISH TO WOO THE YOUNGER, MORE LEFTIST RESTIVE ELEMENTS IN THE PARTY WITH WHOM STOLTENBERG IS REPORTEDLY POPULAR.

4. ASKED WHETHER HE WOULD RAISE AGAIN THE QUESTION OF EEC MEMBERSHIP IF HE BECAME PRIME MINISTER, BRATTELI SAID HE FELT THAT IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO WAIT SOME TIME UNTIL FEELINGS HAD COOLED DOWN. HISTORY SHOWS, HE REMARKED, THAT PROPOSALS WHICH ARE A SOURCE OF CONFRONTATION AT ONE MOMENT SOMETIMES PASS ALMOST UNNOTICED SEVERAL YEARS LATER. MUCH WILL DEPEND, HE FELT, ON WHETHER THE EVOLUTION WITHIN THE EEC WILL BE A FAVORABLE ONE; HE ADDED THAT HE PERSONALLY WAS OPTIMISTIC THAT IT WOULD BE. HE DID NOT ANTICIPATE THAT A DETERIORATION IN ECONOMIC CONDITIONS WOULD OCCUR TO PUSH NORWAY CLOSER TO THE EEC. THE PRINCIPAL INCENTIVE FOR JOINING THE EEC IS A POLITICAL ONE BUT IT IS ROOTED IN THE VERY REAL ECONOMIC INTER-DEPENDENCE OF NORWAY WITH WESTERN EUROPE. NORWEGIAN CONCERN TO MAINTAIN TIES WITH THE CONTINENT IS VERY REAL AND IT WILL NOT BE LESSENERED BY EVIDENCE OF GROWING EAST-WEST DETENTE.

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